

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 05540 091422Z

46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 ACDA-07 EB-07 SAM-01

OMB-01 COME-00 CG-00 DOTE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /085 W

----- 128466

P R 091416Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0639

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 05540

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: ETRN' SY, UK

SUBJECT: SYRIAN ATTACK ON BRITISH SHIP

1. ON BASIS CONVERSATIONS WITH FCO DESK OFFICERS AND FINANCIAL TIMES ACCOUNT, WE HAVE FOLLOWING PICTURE OF INCIDENT INVOLVING SHOOT-UP OF BRITISH CONTAINER SHIP CHESHIRE VENTURE BY SYRIAN NAVY BLOCKADE. 1592-TON SHIP WAS OWNED BY SEA CONTAINERS OF UK. IT WAS ON CHARTER TO MEDTAINER, SUBSIDIARY OF LEBANESE-OWNED NATIONAL SHIPPING CO. OF BEIRUT. SHIP BEGAN LOADING IN TRIPOLI ON APRIL 3 BUT AFTER LOADING PARTIALLY WAS OBLIGED TO LEAVE THE HARBOR BECAUSE OF FIGHTING IN THE TOWN. ON APRIL 4 SHIP ATTEMPTED TO RE-ENTER TRIPOLI BUT WAS INTERCEPTED BY SYRIAN NAVY WHICH DIRECTED IT TO SAIL TO TARTOUS. IT DID NOT BERTH. ON APRIL 5 SHIP WAS RELEASED BY SYRIANS OFF TARTOUS AND WAS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER TRIPOLI AGAIN ON MORNING APRIL 6 WHEN SYRIAN NAVY FIRED ON IT WITHOUT WARNING.

2. FINANCIAL TIMES OF APRIL 8 QUOTES SPOKESMAN FOR MEDTAINER IN LIVERPOOL AS STATING HE ACCEPTED "INDICA-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 05540 091422Z

TIONS" FROM THE SYRIAN AUTHORITIES THAT THE INTENTION

ON THE 6TH HAD BEEN TO FIRE SHOTS ACROSS THE BOW TO
FORCE IT TO HEAVE TO. "HE WAS JUST A LOUSY GUNMAN."
SPOKESMAN ALSO SAID MEDTAINER HAD SENT FOUR SHIPS INTO
TRIPOLI LAST WEEK AND ENCOUNTERED NO DIFFICULTIES.

3. GENERAL COUNCIL OF BRITISH SHIPPING DEMANDED THAT
FCO PROTEST. ACCORDING TO FCO, IT WAS GENERAL COUNCIL
WHICH INFORMED BBC OF IMPENDING APPROACH, THUS PRODUCING
PREMATURE BROADCAST WHICH AROUSED AMBASSADOR ROBERTS'
IRE. HE MADE FCO WELL AWARE OF HIS DISPLEASURE.

ARMSTRONG

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CARGO SHIPS, NAVAL COMBAT OPERATIONS, MILITARY BLOCKADES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON05540
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760135-0139
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760479/aaaacoxm.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN ATTACK ON BRITISH SHIP
TAGS: ETRN, SY, UK, LY
To: STATE DAMASCUS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006